

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

110 North Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022

715-425-2052 ■ [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)

September 15, 2022

*No matter who you are,  
no matter where you are  
on your spiritual journey,  
you are welcome here!*

As Jesus' courageous disciples,  
living God's grace, we strive to:

- Worship faithfully
- Welcome openly
- Grow spiritually
- Care passionately
- Serve generously



## Pastor's Page

Many of you know I think and preach in images. Images help me fully form my ideas and help me remember things better. As we begin our fall programming season at church, I have this image of the world as a raging river. The world is changing quickly and much of our world just seems broken right now. And yet our Christian faith teaches us that God is not only good, but also 'abides' with us.

God is with us even in the brokenness. So what will help us manage the raging river? How do we safely move forward and cross to the other side?

This fall we begin a six-part fall worship series called *Living the Prayer: Living the Prayer of Jesus* which looks at one of the most familiar, but unexamined parts of our Christian faith—*The Lord's Prayer*. Many of us have known this prayer since our childhood. We can't ever think of time when we did not know this prayer. The Lord's Prayer is comforting, but because it is so familiar, we often don't understand both its power and purpose. The Lord's Prayer is like stepping stones that help us safely cross the raging river of life.

Each Sunday for the next six weeks, we will look at a different part of the Lord's Prayer. Jesus taught this prayer as a model prayer, not only to help us pray, but to teach us something important. Each Sunday we will explore six different parts of the prayer as follows:

Sept 11—Hallowing—How can we live holy lives today?

Sept 18—Whose Will?—How can we be a part of God's work?

Sept 25—Daily Bread—How does God feed us?

Oct 2—Forgive—Is forgiveness really important?

Oct 9—Lead us—How does God lead us?

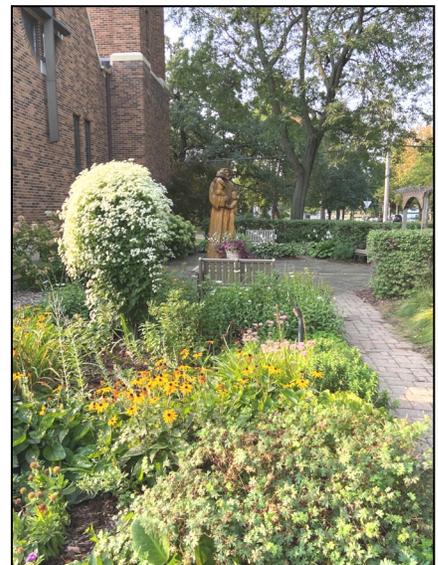
Oct 16—Power and Glory—What exactly is God's Kingdom and why does it matter?

Each Sunday, we will look in depth at each part of the prayer and will be given a focus scripture and task to take with us during the week. A notes page in the back of the bulletin will help you follow along. Join us each week, in person, online or on the radio.

Also each week at 9:00 am, Pastor Stacy will lead a Sunday Morning Bible Text Study that will explore the scripture verses for the day in more detail.

See you at church.

In Gratitude,  
Pastor Chris



## Sunday School Update

Many thanks to all the people who volunteered to teach Sunday School. First Congregational Church should be exceedingly proud that so many people are willing to help support the Sunday School program. This year's teachers include people who have faithfully taught for many years, new teachers who have never taught in the program before, and people who taught in the past and are teaching again. Please be sure to recognize and thank: Kaye Anderson, George Beatty, Susan Betty, Jen Friese, Kathryn Hector, Kim Korent, Christina Krueger, Sarah Meyer, Stacy Myers, Becky Pajac, Natasha Rayne, Ella Shepherd (church intern), Mara Shepherd, Stella Theisen (church intern), Kathy Tomlinson, Anne Tuveson, Christina Treu, Erik Withers.



### Family Resource Center

New this year is a Family Resource Center in Room 107. Children, teens and families are invited to check out books, games, toys, and activity bags for young children. The room is also set up with a comfortable place for reading, 4,500 Legos ready for building, a space for games, and blocks to follow a blueprint to build a cathedral. Come and see!

## Men's Group Resumes

After a long delay, our church men's group will resume on Tuesday, October 4, and then again on Tuesday, October 18 from 9:00-10:00 am. We will meet in the church Youth Room. Coffee and a treat are provided. Pastor Chris will lead us with a brief devotion, give us our topic to discuss and we will have lots of time to meet up and catch up. Join us! Talk to Pastor Chris or Brad Williams for more information.



### Wednesday School Registrations

All children who are in kindergarten through grade 5 are invited to participate in Wednesday School. Elementary students in River Falls are picked up at the four elementary schools in town at the end of the school day. Wednesday School concludes at 5:15. Registration and permission forms are available at church and on the website: <https://firstchurchrf.org/pages/sunday-school>. It is important to have advance registration in order to be adequately prepared for students, particularly due to transportation needs. Wednesday School begins **October 5**. Please contact Pastor Stacy with questions.

### Wednesday School Workers Needed

Wednesday School begins **Oct 5**. We need adult volunteers, drivers to transport children from school to church, & people to provide snacks. Please consider volunteering. Sign up at church or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-wednesday38>



### Welcome to the Rev. Deb Meyer

The Rev. Deb Meyer begins her ministry among us as our part-time Minister of Community and Outreach on Tuesday, November 1 in the church office and on Sunday, November 6 in worship. Please pray for Deb as she leaves her ministry setting in Henderson, Minnesota and moves to the Twin Cities where she will be closer to her daughter and grandchildren. Deb wrote a welcome statement that was shared in last month's newsletter.



## Spring Break Mission Trip

A rite of passage for youth in the church is time at the UCC mission in Biloxi, Mississippi, Back Bay Mission. After many delays and cancellations due to Covid, this trip will finally happen during the River Falls Schools spring break, **March 11–18, 2023**. We will spend the week rehabbing houses, enjoying the warm sun along the Gulf Coast, exploring New Orleans, going to the beach and even going for a schooner ride. Space is limited to 22 people this year and you must be at least 14 to participate. A sign up and informational meeting will be **Sunday, September 25** in the Youth Room following worship. This is literally a life changing week. We will also need some adult volunteers and people skilled with light construction and home repairs. Join us!

## Boston Meeting for High Schoolers

For about 10 years now we have taken our 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Confirmands on a 'Big Trip' to Boston as part of their confirmation experience. On the trip, they learn both about the history of our Congregational Church and nation as they converge in Boston. Highlights include the Freedom Trail (USS Constitution, Bunker Hill, Boston Common, Boston Massacre Site), worship at Old South Church, as well as a trip to Plymouth and recreated Pilgrim and Native American villages.

With the pandemic, this trip has been postponed numerous times. The date for this trip has been set for **April 20–23, 2023**. All confirmands from 2020, 2021 and 2022 as well as those who will be confirmed this spring, are eligible for this trip. A sign-up and information meeting will be **Sunday, September 18** following the 10:00 am worship service in the Youth Room. Parents and confirmands should attend.



Boston Trip in 2019

## College Pack Addresses Needed!

If you have a college-aged student, please make sure the church office has their email address so we can send them a college pack! Packing the college packs has become a tradition in our confirmation and youth group programs. This will be done in mid September so please send those addresses in now! You can email them to our church secretary at [missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org). Thanks!

## College Pack Items Needed

Our Middle and High School Youth will be packing college packs to send to all of our college and technical school youth. Whether they are studying away at school, or here and living at home, we will have a college pack for them (make sure you provide their address!). Items are gathered by our youth group members but we also invite the congregation to support this effort as well. Think of items you might have wanted to receive when you were away from home. We ask for them to come in packs of 5 or 10 of each item you donate. Ideal items are lightweight (so they can be mailed). Pens. Fun items from the Dollar Store or Target. Candy. Be creative! Look for the donation box in the Fellowship Hall! Thank you.

## How Was Our Church Building Used This Past Week?

- Worship
- Sunday School
- Coffee Fellowship
- 2 yoga classes
- 3 music group practices
- 3 confirmation classes
- Among Friends Program
- Cribbage group
- 5 meetings
- Funeral luncheon
- Blood Drive
- To Pack College Packs

This is one week in the life of our church building. Thank you for the financial support which makes all these programs possible. Special thanks to those who give to our church Building Fund. Please continue your generous support of both so we can continue our ministry to church and community!

# World Mental Health Day

The World Health Organization will be recognizing Monday, October 10, as World Mental Health Day. This is a day to help raise awareness about mental health issues and focus on the mental health of you and your loved ones.

Here are some things you can do to celebrate World Mental Health Day:

1. Donate. The National Alliance for Mental Illness St. Croix Valley (NAMI—St. Croix), Restorative Services, Arbor Place, the Butterfly Path are some examples of local non-profit organizations.
2. Check in with a friend. Do you have a friend who is going through a difficult time? Give them a call, email, or message to say “hi” or to see how they are doing.
3. Practice self-care. Yoga, prayer, meditation, journal, take a walk, re-read a favorite book, listen to music, have lunch with a friend, do whatever brings you joy.
4. Affirm your faith. Attend worship, stay for coffee fellowship, connect with others.
5. Practice random acts of kindness. Pay it forward in the coffee line, buy doughnuts or chocolates for co-workers, or prepare a meal for an elderly neighbor.
6. Raise awareness about mental health by wearing or displaying a green ribbon.
7. Reduce the stigma. Increase the understanding of mental illnesses by engaging in caring conversations with others.
8. Make that appointment with a professional if you need to take care of your own mental health.

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## Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study has begun on Wednesday afternoons, 1:00–2:30 pm, in the Youth Room. The first session was **September 14**. The year has begun with a study of Hebrews. The book we use is available in the church office for \$25. Please indicate your interest on the sign-up table or online: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-adult1>

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## Sunday Morning Text Study

Sunday morning Bible text study has begun from 9:00–9:45 am. This group has formerly been called the Adult Forum, but shifted last year to a focus on the assigned Bible readings for worship, hence the new name. Please join us for an engaging discussion of the texts. All are welcome!

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## Mental Health & Wellbeing Update

Regretfully, the presenters from the Behavioral and Mental Health Program at Hudson Physicians who were scheduled to lead the Mental Health and Wellbeing sessions in October, have unexpectedly needed to cancel. The Christian Education and Mission Education committees will seek other speakers and events focused on supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing. Stay tuned.

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## Fall 2022 Courses with the Damascus Project

Is this you or someone you know?

- *You wish you knew more about the Bible.*
- *You're leading in your church but feel overwhelmed and alone.*
- *You struggle to understand who God is in your life.*

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## Thanks for...

- All 20 people who signed up to teach Sunday School this year!
- Those who participated in our latest blood drive—it was full again!
- The return of our Men's Group (see details in this newsletter)
- Diane Welsh, Pat Anderson and others who served the funeral lunch for the family of the Rev. Don Laue.

The Damascus Project would love to help. Join one of their fall courses today! All of the courses are offered online and include a mixture of opportunities to learn on your own and at your own pace and to meet with your peers and the instructors on Zoom. See the flyer on the sign-up table and visit [www.the-damascus-project.org](http://www.the-damascus-project.org) to learn more.



**Wednesday, September 21 - Middle School Youth Trip to Dairy Queen!** - What better way to celebrate the first middle school youth group meeting of the year, AND finally receiving our church van, than traveling to Dairy Queen for some ice cream! Please sign up so Alex can plan accordingly if we need an additional vehicle. Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-middle8>

**Wednesday, September 28 - High School Youth Trip to Dairy Queen and College Packs!** - What better way to celebrate the first high school youth group meeting of the year, AND finally receiving our church van, than traveling to Dairy Queen for some ice cream! We will also finish the college packs this night. Bring your items! Please sign up or text Alex so he can plan accordingly if we need an additional vehicle. Alex will also communicate via HS intern texting thread. Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-high3>

**Wednesday, October 5 - Middle School Youth Group/Church Meal**—Join us for games and Halloween decorating for trunk or treat on Oct 30. Supplies will be provided to create decorations as a group! Church meals also begin tonight. Youth group students eat for 5 dollars at church starting at 5:45pm. Please rsvp for the meal on the weekly signup before Tuesdays at 4pm.

**Sunday, October 9 - White Pine Berry Farm**—Join us at White Pine Berry Farm at 1pm! Please sign up so Alex and Sarah know how many are going, and designate if you would like to ride in the church van or will be dropped off and picked up there! Events include a corn maze, tractor ride, apple and pumpkin picking, hay barrel obstacle course, live animals, gift shop, and various Family Days events! Activities will conclude by 4pm. Sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-youth>

### Church Yoga

Jan Hansen's church yoga group meets on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** in the church Fellowship Hall from **9:00-10:00 am** and via Zoom. Please contact the church office to receive the Zoom link.



### Offering QR Code

1. On your device, open your Camera app or QR Code app
2. Point your camera at the QR Code
3. Click tab 'Give Online'



### Cribbage Night

The cribbage group is meeting on the second Monday at the church. Players are asked to donate \$2 and the group decides which charity to donate it to. Playing time starts at **7:00 pm**. All players and abilities welcome. The next game will be **October 10**.

### Mortgage Summary—As of August 31

Original cost of Facilities Expansion Project	\$2,386,970.00
Remaining amount on Bank Loan	\$285,189.20
Cash on hand in the Building Fund	\$210,584.05
Interest Rate (Locked in through January 2027)	3.39%
Monthly Payment	\$2,622.76

## Treasurer's Report

	Week of Sept 4, 2022	Year to Date
General Fund Income*	\$ 8,127	\$ 330,287
General Fund Operational Needs	\$ 9,909	\$ 356,724

A full accounting of all income and expenses is available in the church office.

\*Includes annual and monthly gifts.

### Church Staff Contact Info

Pastor: Chris Myers—[chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)  
 Office: Missy Luedtke—[missy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:missy@firstchurchrf.org)  
 Education: Stacy Myers—[stacy@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:stacy@firstchurchrf.org)  
 Youth: Alex and Sarah Plum—[rfyouthgroup@gmail.com](mailto:rfyouthgroup@gmail.com)  
 Music: Jamie Mills—[degolierjamie@gmail.com](mailto:degolierjamie@gmail.com)  
 Choir: Sarah Plum—[sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.e.plum.95@gmail.com)  
 Building: Farnum Fuller—[farnumfuller@gmail.com](mailto:farnumfuller@gmail.com)  
 Maintenance: Tim Bylander—[timthefixitguy@gmail.com](mailto:timthefixitguy@gmail.com)

## People in the Pews: Melissa Wilson

1. *Where did you grow up/hometown?* I grew up on a farm in a small town in Southern Minnesota called Mansfield. The town consisted of a farm store, meat locker, and Lutheran church. The small country church I grew up in was where my grandfather attended and was baptized and confirmed in German. My forefathers brought the church bell to the church on a horse-drawn wagon. I have so much history with this church and was also baptized, confirmed, and married in this church.
2. *Where do you live now?* We live on the west side of River Falls and have lived here for 17 years.
3. *How long have you been attending First Congregational Church?* We've been attending UCC for at least 9 years. We started to get to know UCC when we belonged to a different church and our kids would attend VBS at UCC. We fell in love with the children's ministry and from there, joined as members.
4. *What keeps you coming back to church at UCC?* This is our church community and that is what keeps me coming back. During the pandemic, it meant so much that members of the church would check in on our family, pray for us, and share their care and concern with us. We also couldn't ask for a more caring, forgiving, and accepting youth ministry program. My children's faith has been nurtured and challenged here and I am so grateful for UCC being part of their faith journey.
5. *What is your favorite bible passage or quote or hymn and why?* My favorite is Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. Growing up on a farm in the Midwest, I love this passage because it speaks to my rural routes in the Midwest. There is a time for everything, and this passage guides me through good times and the challenging times, knowing that this is the time for that season and that the season will change.
6. *What is your favorite hobby or pastime?* I love baseball and you can find me at the ballpark often. My favorite MLB team is the MN Twins and during the 2014 All-Star year where the game was at Target Field, we had season tickets to the Twins that year and enjoyed all that hosting an all-star game had to offer. I also love watching my kids do the things they love - no matter what it is and also love spending time with Mickey Mouse at Walt Disney World, where I frequently visit!



Justin, Monty (18), Cheyenne (16), Melissa



### Altar Flowers

Please sign up to provide flowers for the altar for Sunday worship. Sign up at church or on the church website:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-altar>

### Welcomers Needed

Please sign up to be a welcomer on Sunday morning before the worship service. One person is needed for at the bottom of the stairs at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Entrance. Please arrive 20 minutes prior to the worship service. Sign up at church or here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-welcomers>

## Coffee Fellowship Hosts and Liturgists Needed

**Coffee Fellowship Hosts** will be asked to serve Best Maid cookies which are in the church freezer, make lemonade and/or serve coffee. All the materials are provided, you will simply need to serve and clean up. Sign up at church or on the website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-coffee>

**Liturgists** will lead us in the Call to Worship and one of the Scripture Lessons. The material will be emailed out on Thursday to practice. Sign up at church or on the website: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/904054BA9AD29A4FF2-liturgist>

Please note church interns can receive credit for either of these activities. Thank you for volunteering in these important ministries as we continue our journey.

# SERVE generously

## Simpson Shelter Needs

- New men's boxers—sizes S, M, L and XL
- New men's t-shirts—sizes S, M, L, XL, and XXL
- New women's underwear—sizes 5, 6, 7, and 8
- New women's t-shirts—sizes S, M, XL, and XXL
- Deodorant
- Shaving cream and razors
- Travel size shampoo, conditioner, body wash, and bar soap
- Towels
- Toothbrushes

There is a box at the church for donations. Thank you!

## Save Family Fresh Receipts

ARC gets \$1,000 for every \$150,000 in receipts, so every dollar counts. ARC is the agency funded by local churches to help address the immediate needs of people in our community (rent, utility, gas, repair help). A box for receipts is on the back table.

## Save Your Batteries to Recycle!

We have a container available for recycling all those old, depleted batteries. Start saving them now and bring them to church. We'll pass them on to the recyclers and keep them out of landfills and the environment in our ongoing commitment to sustainability.

## Sustainable Living Tip

Water is essential to all of life. There are simple, practical ways that we can be responsible stewards of this precious commodity....such as taking a shorter shower, or turning off the water while we brush our teeth. Another way is to save water you are running from your kitchen sink or bathroom faucet while waiting for the hot water. The water saved can be used for watering your plants and other purposes. --Brought to you by the Mission Education Committee

## amazon smile Free Money for Church Ministries

The church has an Amazon Smile account through which the church can receive a portion of the price of each purchase you make through Amazon. You need to do two things for the church to receive this money. First, go to Amazon Smile by typing in [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and then add First Congregational Church River Falls to your Amazon Smile. Second, order through your Smile account by going to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). Once you do this, the church will receive 0.5% of each eligible order. Please contact the church office if you have questions. Last quarter the church received over \$100 for this account, but that amount could grow greatly if you add the church to your account. Do it today!

## Empty Pill Bottles

The River Falls Lions Club is collecting empty pill bottles, both prescription and over the counter, to send to Africa where there is an urgent need. The bottles will be washed, and the labels soaked off before they are shipped. A blue collection tub is in the gathering area. Please see Carole Mottaz with questions.



## Among Friends

Among Friends is open and accepting new referrals. Among Friends is a community-based social respite program serving adults with memory loss who reside in Pierce and St. Croix Counties. For more information, contact them at (715) 293-2651. Also, check out their website: [amongfriendsrf.com](https://amongfriendsrf.com) and Facebook page. Among Friends is located at the church. **Guests are invited to join them for coffee from 9:30–10:00 am on Tuesday, September 27.**

## Volunteer Opportunities at Among Friends

Among Friends is seeking one or two volunteers on Tuesdays to provide transportation for 2 female participants who live in Hudson. Clients could be picked up at 9:00 am from their locations in Hudson and returned home from the church to Hudson at 2:00 pm. Mileage reimbursement would be provided. Also, we need a volunteer to set up for lunch and do dishes from 11:30 am–12:30 pm. For information, call Norma at (651) 260-5725.



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RIVER FALLS

Office Phone: 715-425-2052  
E-mail: [office@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:office@firstchurchrf.org)  
Website: [www.firstchurchrf.org](http://www.firstchurchrf.org)

## STAFF

Chris Myers, Pastor  
Stacy Johnson, CE Minister  
Missy Luedtke, Office Administrator  
Joel Larsen, Moderator  
Alex and Sarah Plum, Youth Ministers  
Jamie Mills, Music Coordinator and Bell Choir Director  
Sarah Plum, Choir Director  
Marsha Pearson, Organist  
Terry Mithun, Organist  
Tim Bylander, Building Supervisor  
Farnum Fuller, Custodian

Pastor's home phone number:  
Chris Myers 715-426-2075  
[chris@firstchurchrf.org](mailto:chris@firstchurchrf.org)

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## FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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River Falls, Wisconsin 54022

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SEPTEMBER 15, 2022




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## First Communion Information for Parents

### When do children at First Congregational Church begin taking Communion?

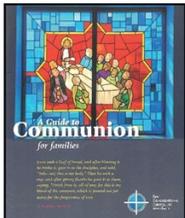
There is no uniform age at First Congregational Church when children begin participating in the Lord's Supper. Some children are pre-school age, others are in elementary school, and some wait until confirmation to begin taking Communion. The Bible and church history do not give decisive guidelines about the age to begin celebrating the Lord's Supper. The decision about when people are welcome at the Lord's Table has largely been made by local worshipping communities. Our practice is to include children when they and their parents think they are ready to participate.

### How will I know when my child is ready?

Some parents choose infant communion for their children. Many parents wait until their children express an interest. Typically, children are ready to participate in Communion when they start asking questions about this sacrament. One important theme of Communion is inclusion: All are welcome at the table of the Lord. If a child feels excluded, it is a good time for that child to begin participating.

### My child does not yet receive Communion. Should she/he still come forward?

Yes, all people are invited to come forward to the servers at the Communion distribution time. Children who will not be communing should keep their hands folded (as opposed to reaching out). This is a signal to the pastor and deacons that the child desires a blessing.



## Communion Resource for Families

First Congregational Church has a new *Guide to Communion*. The resource was specifically designed for families, but it could be helpful for adults as well. Copies of the guide are available on the table in the gathering space.